

Kira-kira: A Novel (Luminous in Its Persistence of Love and Hope) [4 Audio Cassettes/4.5 Hrs.] COMPLETE AND UNABRIDGED (Ages 8-16)

Cynthia Kadohata



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Katie's first word is "kira-kira," the Japanese word for "glittering," and she uses it to describe everything she likes. It was taught to her by her older sister, Lynn, whom Katie worships. Both girls have trouble adjusting when their parents move the family from Iowa to a small town in rural Georgia, where they are among only 31 Japanese-Americans. They seldom see their parents, who have grueling jobs in chicken-processing plants. Then Lynn becomes deathly ill, and Katie is often left to care for her, a difficult and emotionally devastating job. When her sister dies of lymphoma, Katie searches for ways to live up to her legacy and to fulfill the dreams she never had a chance to attain. Told from Katie's point of view and set in the 1950s, this beautifully written story tells of a girl struggling to find her own way in a family torn by illness and horrendous work conditions. Katie's parents can barely afford to pay their daughter's medical bills, yet they refuse to join the growing movement to unionize until after Lynn's death. All of the characters are believable and well developed, especially Katie, who acts as a careful observer of everything that happens in her family, even though there is a lot she doesn't understand. Especially heartbreaking are the weeks leading up to Lynn's death, when Katie is exhausted and frustrated by the demands of her sister's illness, yet willing to do anything to make her happy. Girls will relate to and empathize with the appealing protagonist.-

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